

March 7, 2013

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND
ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation Commission convened in a regular session at 7:01 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, 2013 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Chim, Deemer, DeWitt, Gobble, Martin, and Chairperson Griffiths.

Absent: Commissioner Robbins.

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna and Senior Environmental Quality Officer Duncan.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to grant Commissioner Robbins an excused absence for the March 7, 2013 Commission meeting. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

3. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Martin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. POSTING OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner DeWitt, seconded by Commissioner Chim, moved to accept and file the report of the secretary on the posting of the agenda for this meeting; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Robbins).

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2013

MOTION: Commissioner DeWitt moved to approve the February 7, 2013 Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioners Robbins, Commissioner Gobble abstaining).

Environmental Quality and Energy
Conservation Commission
March 7, 2013

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

7A. GREEN PRIDE IN TORRANCE AWARDS FOR GIRL SCOUTS

Deputy Director Cessna introduced Emily Bagnell, Kelly Bagnell and Kelly Bright who earned Gold Awards in Girl Scout Troop 763. It was noted that the Gold Award is the highest award a Girl Scout can earn and is awarded to Seniors who complete a project that will make a lasting difference.

With the aid of slides, Kelly Bright discussed her development of Trash Free Lunch Tuesdays at five Torrance elementary schools. She described the incentives that were offered to students and craft days at three schools to make recyclable art.

Emily Bright described the composting system that she introduced at Riviera Elementary that would reduce the amount of trash at lunch and snack. She expressed appreciation to Allison Sherman and the City for donating a rotating composting bin.

Kelly Bagnell discussed her efforts to improve the Riviera Kids' Garden. She stated that she weeded, planted, installed signs, and fixed the fence, recognizing the City for donating six benches. She also put up bulletin boards, started a gardening club, and created lesson plans on recycling, carbon footprint, and watershed.

Commissioners commended the girls for their excellent presentation and a job well done.

MOTION: At 7:25 p.m., Commissioner Chim, seconded by Commissioner Gobble, moved to recess for presentation of Green Pride in Torrance awards and a photo opportunity; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

7B. OUTDOOR SMOKE FREE INITIATIVES – HOLLY MAYNES

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Commissioner Deemer recused himself from considering this item and exited the room.

Holly Maynes, representing BHS/NCADD, Post Avenue, distributed handouts, introduced Barbara Devico, and provided a presentation "Tobacco Use, Secondhand Smoke, and the City of Torrance." She stated that they are contracted with Los Angeles County Tobacco Control and Prevention Program and are working with the South Bay Fresh Air Coalition. She presented long-term goals to protect the health of children, the elderly, and community and to create a new social norm. She discussed healthcare costs and lost productivity due to the use of tobacco, noting 443,000 annual deaths from smoking and 73,000 from exposure to secondhand smoke. She shared information about the dangers of secondhand smoke, especially for children and the elderly, and emphasized that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.

She reported that California has led the country in being proactive in implementing smoke-free facilities. She stated that, as of January 2013, 61 cities in Los Angeles County have adopted smoke-free outdoor areas and commended the City for implementing smoking bans at beaches in 2006 and parks in 2011. She presented results of a survey of 875 Torrance residents conducted from May to December 2012, pointing out that 9% of respondents were current tobacco users and 91% were non-

tobacco users. She stated that the majority of respondents would favor a law that would ban smoking in dining patios (89%), doorways and windows (88%), service areas (86%), and public events (87%). She cited cities that have smoke-free outdoor dining that include Hermosa Beach, Long Beach, Carson, Compton, and Culver City.

Ronald Middleton, Arlington Avenue, stated that he suffers from COPD and emphysema, and voiced his support for a comprehensive outdoor smoke-free ordinance.

Joan Waddell, Cabrillo Avenue, expressed appreciation that the City implemented smoking bans at beaches and parks and discussed the change in social norm, how difficult it is to stop smoking, and dangers of third hand smoke.

Julissa Gomez, American Lung Association in California, Los Angeles, stated that their mission is to save lives and protect people from lung disease, and they support strong local regulations to protect the health of the public from harmful effects of tobacco. She stated that an ordinance would help workers in the outdoor service community and reported that in 2013 Torrance received a "D" in the category of outdoor area on the State of Tobacco Control Report.

Craig Cadwallader, representing Surfrider Foundation, South Bay Chapter, Manhattan Beach, discussed the litter problem that cigarette butts create. He distributed statistics from 25 years of Coastal Clean Up days, noting that 32% of beach trash is cigarette butts. He stated that Surfrider would like to see Torrance be a leader by adopting a comprehensive smoke free outdoor area ban, adding that they would be willing to install butt receptacles in designated smoking areas at their own expense.

Responding to Commissioner Gobble's inquiry, Deputy Director Cessna recommended bringing the overall idea to City Council before crafting an ordinance. She indicated that the Commission may want to see sample ordinances as well as information about fines and enforcement actions before moving forward.

Commissioners, staff, and audience members discussed Change Lab Solutions in Sacramento that crafts model ordinances, State laws regarding smoking and signage, promoting self enforcement, and exemptions for certain types of businesses such as cigar bars.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to direct staff to bring back sample ordinances neighboring cities, Los Angeles County, and the State have utilized that promote continued outreach on encouraging not smoking and that protect the health of their citizens. Commissioner Chim seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioners Robbins and Deemer).

Commissioner Deemer returned to the meeting room.

7C. LEAF BLOWERS

Deputy Director Cessna provided background on discussions regarding leaf blowers and other motor-powered gardening equipment at the December 2012 Commission meeting. She presented staff's recommendation to develop an ordinance regulating hours of operation that mirrors the construction hours ordinance, coupled with community outreach and education. She noted that TMC Section 46.3.1 Construction of

Buildings and Projects was included in agenda materials and suggested that Sections a) and d) be revised to address noise generated by gardeners. She stated that they would need to target commercial and industrial properties regarding proper use of leaf blowers and homeowner associations regarding hours of use information.

Commissioner Gobble stated that would support restricting hours of operation but expressed concern that the proposed ordinance does not address particulate matter, toxic smoke and dust, and pollution going into storm drains.

Commissioner DeWitt stated that it is important to determine what the clear objective is and pointed out that restricting hours would affect Park Services staff.

Commissioner Deemer questioned what parts of the City are suffering and if it would be possible to ban use only in core residential areas.

When Commissioner Martin questioned what started this issue, Deputy Director Cessna explained that looking at particulate matter is part of the Strategic Plan and that staff have received citizen complaints. She noted that some cities ban all leaf blowers, some ban gas but not electric leaf blowers, and some ban use in residential areas only. She related staff's understanding from discussions that the biggest concerns were education/outreach and noise. She suggested moving forward with an initial outreach program and restricting hours of operation before taking further steps.

Chairperson Griffiths stated that he supports the education and outreach component but would like to hear more from the public about their concerns. He noted that his personal concern is noise and that mirroring the construction restrictions would not improve the quality of life for citizens.

Commissioner Gobble raised the possibility of supporting an all out ban but making parks and some commercial areas exempt.

Commissioner Chim suggested conducting a survey of residents and homeowners associations.

Deputy Director Cessna advised that a stand-alone survey would be very expensive to conduct but she would look into the possibility of piggybacking off another survey being conducted.

Commissioner DeWitt stated that he would support hearing more from the public and brought up Chairperson Griffith's suggestion at the last meeting to consolidate days of operation.

Deputy Director Cessna stated that staff determined that restricting days of operation would be very difficult to enforce.

Craig Cadwallader, Manhattan Beach, discussed dangers from particulate matter and noise levels and encouraged the Commission to recommend adoption of an ordinance that has "teeth in it" to make it easier to enforce.

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to direct staff to explore options for leaf blowers and gardening equipment including hours of operation, potential banning of gas

leaf blowers in residential areas, and input from homeowners associations. ***Motion died for lack of a second.***

MOTION: Commissioner Gobble moved to direct staff to explore the idea of a residential leaf blower ban in its entirety as well as the limitation of hours of operation of residential leaf blowers, and to obtain feedback from as many homeowners associations as possible on these items prior to further Commission consideration. ***Motion died for lack of a second.***

MOTION: Chairperson Griffiths moved to direct staff to produce two levels of leaf blower ordinances: 1) an all out ban of residential leaf blowers and 2) restricting leaf blowers more heavily than current construction regulations but less than a total ban, and to get as much feedback as possible from constituents, including homeowners associations, to gauge their opinions. Commissioner DeWitt seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Robbins).

8. OLD BUSINESS

8A. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Commissioner Gobble nominated Commissioner Chim for Vice-Chairperson of the Commission; Commissioner Chim respectfully declined the nomination.

Commissioner Chim nominated Commissioner Gobble for Vice-Chairperson of the Commission. Commissioner Gobble accepted the nomination and Commissioner Gobble was elected Vice-Chairperson of the Commission through June 2013 on a unanimous roll call vote (absent Commissioner Robbins).

9. ORAL COMMUNICATION

9A. Deputy Director Cessna informed Commissioners about upcoming items on future Commission agendas: South Bay Environmental Services Center regarding Climate Action planning and Beacon Awards in April, urban beekeeping and chickens in May, and outdoor smoke free initiatives and leaf blowers in June.

9B. Commissioner DeWitt stated that Exxon Mobil has asked him to be on their advisory panel and would check with the City Attorney's office before accepting.

9C. Commissioner Gobble stated that he attended the South Bay Cities Council of Governments general assembly "At What Cost?" on February 22 and that he found discussions on Car2Go very interesting.

9D. Commissioner Chim congratulated Commissioners Deemer and Martin on their appointments to the Commission.

9E. Chairperson Griffiths stated that he also attended the February 22 general assembly and asked staff to keep the Commission informed about the Car2Go proposal. He discussed a presentation about a program that provides no-cost leases for solar installations for government facilities and offered to forward the information to staff.

9E. Chairperson Griffiths relayed a resident's inquiry about public use of the City's electric vehicle chargers and Deputy Director Cessna stated that the public often uses the two charging stations. She noted that the City is considering installing a charger at the City Yard for transit vehicles and that several chargers are being conditioned in for new developments.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 9:47 p.m., Commissioner Gobble moved to adjourn the meeting to April 4, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room. Commissioner Martin seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Griffiths so ordered.

Approved as Submitted April 4, 2013 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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